

English II Honors Summer Reading Assignment

Ms. Mathes and Mrs. Villareal

In this course, we'll explore the topic of culture and its effect on identity, particularly in teens. As a starting point, this summer we'd like you to read *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely and *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer. We will discuss and write about these books extensively during the first few months of class. Please don't assume that they "don't count" just because they're summer reading books!

Active, engaged reading is a **must** for this class. We expect you to **underline passages** that contribute to your understanding of character, conflict, and symbolism and **add notes in the margins** about **how/why these quotes are significant**. Focus on quotes that contain good concrete details that suggest an associative meaning. You'll find annotation less time consuming and more useful if you are **selective** about what you underline and annotate. A well-annotated book will benefit your class participation and writing assignments, so start acclimating yourself to this expectation this summer.

Description and Assignment for *All American Boys*

All American Boys is a common read for all sophomores. It's about two boys, Rashad Butler and Quinn Collins; one boy is beaten by a police officer; the other boy witnesses what happens but struggles to come forward about what he saw. The aftermath of this act forces everyone in the boys' community to face, in their own way, the truth that racism persists in our nation and involves all of us, whether we want it to or not. Although it's a work of fiction, this book addresses many of the topics concerning race, inequality, and identity that flood our news and social media feeds on a daily basis.

Assignment

- For each character in the book, highlight quotes that reveal their attitude towards racism and their response to it. Come to class with *one specific character* from the book (major character or minor character) whose reaction to the events of the story was inspiring or troubling to you, and be prepared to share quotes about that individual and their response.
- Also highlight and come to class prepared to discuss *specific moments in the book* that challenge or reinforce your current thinking about race and stereotypes in America.

Description and Assignment for *Into the Wild* (we'll talk about this book first during the year)

Into the Wild tells the true story of a young man named Chris McCandless who grew up in our nation's capital, came from an upper-income family, received an excellent college education, and was described by many as motivated and personable. Despite, or perhaps *because of*, these advantages, Chris struggled to identify himself as an individual and to reconcile his social responsibilities with his personal goals and values. Ultimately, McCandless turned his back on his family, education, society, and all the material comforts of life to wander America as a vagabond—working odd jobs, making friends in low places, living life on his own terms. He reached the ultimate goal of his journey, Alaska, with the aim of living off the land for a time, and while he realized that dream for a time, a series of unfortunate events led Chris to die of starvation less than four months after his arrival in the Alaskan bush country.

Into the Wild chronicles Jon Krakauer's attempt to understand what motivated Chris McCandless to seek out such extreme isolation and self-sufficiency by tracing McCandless's journey across the US and talking to the people he befriended as well as the family he left behind. McCandless's story (and Krakauer's book) has provoked passionate and varied responses: some people view Chris as a visionary who suffered a tragic end, while others dismiss him as an arrogant, self-centered man who got what he deserved.

Assignment

Choose 1-2 of the topics below *before* you begin reading the book, write them on the inside cover of your book, and annotate quotes that help you explore and develop a better understanding of these topics.

We also want you to keep an **association journal for this book** this summer, and have it ready to turn in on the first or second day of class. **You MUST type your work** and can access a blank association journal form from Mr. Villareal's Canvas page or from the Summer Reading page on the Clark Library website. If you were in English I last year, Mrs. Villareal or I will email you an electronic copy of the journal template. We've included a sample journal entry with this handout; **please organize your entries in the same way.**

How many quotes do you need? Well, plan to complete a journal entry after every **2-3 chapters of the book**. So, after you finish reading 2-3 chapters, choose 1 quote from those chapters that has **excellent concrete details or associative properties**, and write a thorough journal entry on that quote. After you finish another 2-3 chapters, find another quote and do the same. Think about choosing quotes that help you develop your understanding of one or more of the topics below so that you have excellent material for a paper. **AVOID CHOOSING LINES OF TEXT WHERE THE AUTHOR TELLS YOU OUTRIGHT WHAT TO THINK OF A PARTICULAR DETAIL, AS THESE LINES REQUIRE NO ANALYSIS.**

Topics to annotate for as you read (Choose 1-2 on which to focus your annotations and journal entries)

- An excerpt from the **epigraph** (quote at the beginning of a book or chapter) that begins chapter four reads, “*To the desert go prophets and hermits; through the deserts go pilgrims and exiles.*” “Nabi” is the Hebrew word for **prophet**, and it literally means mouthpiece. So, a prophet is a mouthpiece for God. A prophet is someone whose message transcends time and challenges the listener to be their best self. Prophets are counter-cultural and are often persecuted, as their message challenges the status quo. In scripture, true prophets are usually unlikely figures who did not choose or even want the role but feel they are called to it. According to this definition, can we see Chris as a prophet, his actions as prophetic?
- Chris doesn’t get along at all with his parents, and he doesn’t have much respect for arbitrary figures of authority. However, he does connect with and respect many other people over the course of his travels. **Who are the people who make the greatest impact on Chris**, and what traits/values does Chris find attractive about these people and their lives? What message does Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* communicate about the importance of community?
- One of the themes in this book is **transformation** and self-knowledge. What features of the culture Chris grew up in cause his desire for transformation? Why doesn’t he fit in? How does Chris believe the “vagabond” lifestyle will help him achieve transformation and self-knowledge? Is Chris successful, in your opinion, in achieving transformation?
- According to *Into the Wild*, when faced with social norms that challenge or oppose your own values, aspirations, and beliefs what are the various responses (OR what is one response) to the **cultural tension** teens may experience? What are the consequences of these responses?
- According to Jon Krakauer, what is the relationship between personal risk and growth? Based on examples from the book and from your own experience, what are some safe ways to test our own personal limits, both physical and emotional? OR . . . According to the text, *are* there any safe ways to test our own personal limits?

Scroll down for a sample Summer Reading Journal Entry

<p>Cite Evidence using MLA parenthetical citations that include the author’s last name and the page number. (Krakauer 17)</p> <p>Label Evidence—does the quote contain good examples of diction, imagery, detail, simile, metaphor, symbolism, etc.</p> <p>Label whether the quote develops your understanding of conflict, character, or theme</p>	<p>Write Associations/ Connotations--What associative qualities, conditions, and values is the author implying/suggesting through the evidence?</p> <p>Do not simply use synonyms for words.</p>	<p>Determine Relationships</p> <p>Does this quote <u>Repeat another quote/idea</u> [similarity, analogy, recurrence, echo, parallelism]</p> <p><u>Contrast another quote/idea</u> [incongruity, antithesis, opposition, tension]</p> <p><u>Show a shift in idea</u> [turn, transformation, alteration]</p> <p><u>Show a juxtaposition of two ideas</u> [contiguity, adjacency, montage]</p>	<p>Elaborate on Associative/ Connotative Meaning—how do the connotations/associations you have with the evidence suggest an interpretation of character, conflict, or theme.</p> <p>DO NOT simply paraphrase/restate the meaning of the quote in your own words.</p>
<p>“So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservation, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more damaging to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. If you want to get more out of life, you must lose your inclination for monotonous security and adopt a helter-skelter style of life that will at first appear to you to be crazy” (Krakauer 57).</p> <p>Diction develops my understanding of Chris and his conflict with society.</p>	<p>WILL NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE-- Chris <i>believes</i> people have the power to choose to change their lives</p> <p>CONDITIONED-- suggests we are part of an experiment—being controlled by forces larger than ourselves</p> <p>APPEAR, IN REALITY-- Chris believes life in the “real world” is the illusion distracting us from real life.</p> <p>MONOTONOUS SECURITY VS. HELTER-SKELTER—he uses a lot of opposites; not a lot of gray area for Chris</p>	<p>Chris emphasizes the CONTRAST between the radical, exciting lifestyle he believes in and the monotonous life we’re conditioned to live and think we want.</p> <p>His REPETITION of contrasting words and ideas show how strongly he feels these are the only two choices in life.</p>	<p>Chris’s strong diction and use of opposites in his letter to Ronald Franz reveals his personal philosophy that conformity is damaging while non-conformity is liberating. The repeated contrasts between these words also suggest that Chris views life in very black and white terms; he’s an extremist. Words like “initiative” and “adventurous” (Krakauer 57) are all strong, active words that contrast words like “conditioned, security, and conformity” (57) to show how he views these two lifestyles differently. The first lifestyle is for people who show initiative—who are in control of their own destiny, while the second is for people who allow themselves to be controlled and complacent.</p>

			<p>Chris creates a small paradox when he claims that a life of safety and security is actually “damaging.” While a life of safety might preserve the body, Chris believes it dulls the mind and spirit.</p> <p>Therefore, his decision to leave wasn’t just a matter of preference; it was a matter of self-preservation.</p>
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